Literacy Rate in Backward Districts

988. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the literacy rate amongst males and females in backward districts, State-wise;

(b) the reasons for the low literacy rate amongst females in these backward districts; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI JAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD PATIL): (a) Literacy rates amongst male and female in the districts having literacy rates below national average of 52.21%, state-wise are given in the Annexure (*See* Appendix 189, Annexure No. 29]

(b) Some of the major reasons for the low literacy rate amongst females are — deep-rooted socio-cultural prejudices against education of women and girls; lack of awareness about the utility and relevance of women's education; pre-occupation with household chores; female and child labour in agriculture and industry; poor socio-economic status; unattractive school environment.

(c) Total Literacy Campaigns launched since 1988 under the National Literacy Mission have adopted a strategy that lays considerable emphasis on making efforts to:—

— Create an environment where women demand knowledge and information, empowering themselves to change their lives.

— Inculcate in women the confidence that change is possible, if women work collectively.

— Spread the message that education of women is a pre-condition for fighting against their oppression.

— Highlight the plight of the girl child and stress the need for Universalisation of elementary education as a way of addressing the issue.

Besides, the District Primary Education Programme launched in 1994 has a marked gender focus; and the districts selected for coverage under the programme are pre-dominantly low female literacy districts.

Illiteracy among Women

989. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 32% of women in India are illiterate;

(b) whether most of these women are in the rural areas; and

(c) what steps are being taken by Government to eradicate this level of illiteracy and in what time frame?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI JAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD PATIL): (a) According to 1991 Census the female illiteracy rate was 60.71%. As per the 53rd round survey on literacy conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation ending 1997, the illiteracy rate of women was 50%.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Total Literacy Campaigns launched by the National Literacy Mission have laid special emphasis on women's mobilisation and participation, particularly in areas with low female literacy. The literacy campaigns aim at creating an environment where women demand knowledge and information. The campaigns make use of a variety of media to spread the message that education of women is a pre-condition for improving their status in society. Gender issues have been suitably incorporated in the literacy primers. Out of the approximately 80 million persons made literate through literacy campaigns so far, approximately 48 million